



Executive Summary

Prepared for:

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December 1, 2025

Project History

Fueled by the success of the giant screen film and educational project *Dream Big: Engineering Our World*, in 2024, ASCE reunited with MacGillivray Freeman Films for another giant-screen film, *Cities of the Future*, released during Engineers Week. The 40-minute film features five young engineers working to solve the world's most pressing challenges with inspiring solutions.

At the center of *Cities of the Future* is Paul Lee, P.E., ENV SP, a licensed civil, mechanical, and electrical engineer with a passion for engineering a more sustainable future. *Cities of the Future* showcases novel solutions for future-focused transportation, energy, and urban design. Real-life examples of advanced engineering solutions, transposed alongside imaginative but carefully researched concepts presented by middle-schoolers competing in the Future City Competition, serve as inspiration to a new generation of aspiring engineers.

Expanding Access

With support from UEF, ASCE was able to expand access to the *Cities of the Future* film by producing a 20-minute version of the film to increase the number of educational theaters able to show the film, bringing the experience to significantly more communities worldwide. In addition, by providing resources to market the film to educators and theaters, as well as by supporting the Send a Kid to the Future fund, UEF support established and strengthened partnerships between engineering societies, youth and community organizations, and museums.

Lessons learned from *Dream Big*, along with changes in the museum and giant screen sector, shaped the strategies of this phase of the project. Giant screen theaters are often located in major cities, limiting access to students from rural areas. In addition, Title 1 schools often struggle to access theaters due to the cost of student transportation and meals. Moreover, market shifts due to the pandemic and the rise of streaming platforms have created demand for shorter films that can be screened twice per hour, versus once per hour for full-length (40+ minute) features.

Science centers and museums are a major source of informal education for both students and the general public. Partnerships between these institutions and engineering organizations represent a significant opportunity to promote engineers' contributions to society as well as engineering careers.

Marketing and distribution support are essential to establishing new relationships between museums, engineering societies, and youth-serving organizations. While these organizations share a common mission, they are non-profits with limited resources. New programs carry risk that can be mitigated with start-up funds.

Key activities under this grant included:

- Production of a new, shorter 24-minute version
- A 15-second, fully produced dedication spot recognizing support from the United Engineering Foundation.
- Production of digital masters tailored to these varied formats, available in 2D and 3D offering a strategic edge in distribution. There is strong demand for high-quality, educational 3D content—an area currently underserved.
- Marketing plans were created for theaters
- Screenings at two GSCA conferences in 2025.
- Small ad and promotional campaigns provided to theaters along with lobby standees and promotional items to boost audience engagement.
- Providing grants to support institutional partnerships that would expand access in largely underserved communities.
- Recognition of UEF support on the project website and in the online educators' guide.

Future Access

While activities funded through this grant were limited to the 2025 calendar year, their impact (and recognition for UEF's support) will have lasting impact.

Future distribution plans for the 24-minute version of *Cities of the Future* (with UEF's dedication spot) include:

- **Calendar Year 2025:** Exclusive theatrical distribution continues
- **Engineers Week 2026:** Add film to the Apple Vision Pro content platform, on MFF's Epic Earth site
- **Spring 2026:** Launch public library Earth Day program.
- **September 2026:** Expand Vimeo streaming access to all schools and educational institutions. (Vimeo-on-Demand at \$5 for a 72-hour rental) Waive streaming fees for Title I schools.
- **Late 2026:** Broaden availability across additional streaming platforms
- **Ongoing:** *Cities of the Future Community Workshops*. A curriculum suitable for museums, universities, high schools, or engineering organizations. Audiences view the film and engage in a community-focused interactive workshop. The 24-minute version of the film is ideally suited to this format.